OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

PRESENT ALARMING

CRISIS:

ADDRESSED TO THE

NOBILITY and CLERGY.

BY J. MORFITT, BARRISTER AT LAW.

Navibus & casibus vita Populi Anglicani permiſsa est.
Pudet hac opprobria nobis.
Et dici potuiſse, et non potuiſse refelli.

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PREFACE.

Birmingham, April 3, 1797.

SOME people in this Town and Neighbourhood, though unable to contradict the Author's facts, or confute his arguments, feel a malignant pleasure in loading him with abuse for the mighty crime of changing his sentiments with the purest and most disinterested views. It is undoubtedly true, he did some years ago write a few poetical trifles,—mere *nugæ canoræ*,—against the Diſsenters; but Poetry was never considered yet as sound, deliberate reasoning: on the contrary, the very soul of it is fiction. The Author acknowledges that there is a little change in his political opinions, or, in other words, that he is wiser now than he was some time ago. But, let it be considered, that the prejudices of early youth have fettered more vigorous understandings than his, and that there is a magnanimity in the retraction of honest

error. Surely in this land of boasted freedom he may be allowed the humble privilege of following the dictates of unbiaſsed judgment, and the suggestions of uninfluenced feelings. He will never deprecate censure for that kind of inconsistency which changes crude, indigested opinions for more mature and well-weighed conclusions. Instead of shame, he feels a pride in an apostacy from wrong to right—in such an apostacy as once produced our Reformation in Religion, and Revolution in Government. May he not be permitted to say, *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis.* He is a friend to the King and Constitution, but an enemy to abuses, which "he that runs may read." To abilities of a wider range he leaves the important task of investigating the *Causes and Consequences of the preſent War.* He confines himself to such considerations as seem to him the best calculated to promote unanimity, and such a concentration of strength as will enable us to laugh our enemies to scorn. His object is to stimulate the rich, and waken the great, who resemble the thoughtleſs Indians dozing beneath the shade of the baleful Manchineel, whose dews

are death. But as Mr. Erskine's sentiments are congenial to his own, he rejoices in an opportunity of "throwing a handful of mortar into an "edifice of marble."

"Some positive, persisting fops we know,"
"Who when once wrong, must needs be always so;
"But I with pleasure see my errors past,
"And make each day a critique on the last."

POPE.

OBSERVATIONS

On the present alarming Crisis.

MANY people, well affected to the King and Constitution, are much hurt at the thoughtleſs diſsipation of the higher ranks of the kingdom in these days and hours of peril. They are astonished at the unfeeling avarice of the rich, the supineneſs of the great, and the folly of both. They see us plunged in a war beyond example expensive, most alarming in its progreſs, and very uncertain in its iſsue. The burthen of that war is thrown, with an almost unsupportable preſsure, on the middle claſses of the people, while lords are rioting in their palaces, and Bishops slumbering in their stalls. The Country is threatened with a most serious invasion, and those are called upon to repel the invader, who have much inclination, but little power, while those who have the power seem destitute of the inclination. The danger with which we are threatened does not proceed from an old enfeebled Government, but from a young vigorous Republic, whose amazing exertions have been attended with amazing succeſs, who has surmounted the barriers of nature, and whom the Alps and Pyrenees opposed in vain. Their late attempt upon Ireland,

though abortive, proves that no difficulties can check, no dangers deter them. They regarded not the fogs of December, nor a tempestuous ocean, nor a fleet decidedly superior. They tell us that they were defeated only by the hostility of the elements, and they exult in the poſsibility of succeſs, notwithstanding the number and vigilance of our fleets. They expect nothing but hard blows beyond the Rhine, and say that they must march a hundred leagues, and fight twenty battles, before they can reach Vienna, whereas in England there are no fortified towns, and one battle may decide, because it has formerly decided, the fate of the kingdom. They say that the Capital can be at no great distance from the point of invasion, and that they will soon be enabled to reach the Bank, and hoist the tri-coloured flag on the Tower of London. This is by no means empty gasconade. They derive immense advantages, which they never had before, from the poſseſsion of Flanders and Holland, and the long line of coast from which a descent may be practicable. I mention these things, not as matter of despair, but to rouse our courage, and stimulate exertion. It is folly to disguise, and still greater folly to disregard, a danger of such magnitude. What must an old Englishman think, when he is informed that we can no longer find security in our *wooden walls*, which he has so often triumphantly toasted? Inactivity is now become criminal, and a moment's delay may plunge us in irretrievable ruin. Yet (tell it not in Gath) the great ones of the land look

on with a most fashionable *sang froid*, though standing on the brink of a tremendous precipice; hoodwinked by pride, or by folly, they seem to walk as securely as in the middle of the King's highway. With the true spirit of gamblers, (which many of them are,) they put every thing at hazard, and trust to the blind decision of Chance. Some of them, perhaps, are very coolly laying bets upon a subject which involves the destruction of themselves and their Country. Those insulting threats, which would have made the blood of their ancestors boil in their veins, cannot draw the present race of lordlings from their frivolous amusements. Though surrounded by dangers external and internal, they cannot be persuaded to quit their fashionable fooleries, but will prefer an opera or a horse-race to the salvation of the kingdom. Nothing can be more discouraging to the lower ranks, nothing more inviting to the French, than this scandalous apathy. Our enemies must neceſsarily think that the people will have the sense to see it, and perhaps the spirit to resent it.

It is a truth too clear for contradiction, that property should defend property, and that those who have the most at stake should exert themselves the most. Is it right or reasonable, that those who have little or nothing should quit their homes, and risk their lives, to protect those who have all, or the greatest part, and who are too lazy to protect themselves? Particularly when the war is their own, the war of Lords spiritual and temporal.

Our Bishops (God bleſs them!) cost the nation nearly 100,000l. per annum for doing very little, and our Archdeacons, Deans, Prebends, and Canons about 140,000l. a year for doing still leſs, if any thing. These sums are given that "the Church may rear her mitred head in Parliament," as Mr. Burke expreſses it; but surely they are pretty round sums to give as premiums to idleneſs. I hope I do not blaspheme, when I say, that I cannot help considering most of our prelates (I do not say all) as so many *ecclesiastical beef-eaters*. I paſs by the fat pluralists, rosy rectors, and unweildy vicars, who "leave to tatter'd crape the drudgery of pray'r." I wish them joy of their goodly poſseſsions. But surely they should shew some compaſsion for the sufferings of the People, some regard to the danger of the Sovereign, and some anxiety for the safety of the Church. When Spain was lately invaded by the French, the Clergy in that country came forward with a handsome unsolicited donation. But though we are threatened with a similar calamity, our "sons of Zebedee" do not seem disposed to sacrifice a single article of their splendid equipage, nor part with an uſeleſs groom. Reasoning is lost upon them—Example cannot influence them. Right Reverend Fathers in God! Most pious and learned Dignitaries, the Ornaments of the Church and Pillars of the State! the Church is in danger—the King is not safe—the French are in the Channel—— "Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!" Nothing can resist the victorious legions of the gigantic Republic. The Pope, finding spiritual armour ineffectual,

is girding on his sword, and his Cardinals are erecting the holy banners of Rome. What are ye doing? If ye cannot fight, why do ye not contribute, or be serviceable in some shape or other? Though Ministers of the Gospel of Peace, ye are too fond of blowing the trumpet of war: Will ye do nothing to alleviate its calamities, or lefsen its burthens? But I may hollow till I am hoarse. Luxury has shut their ears, and steeled their hearts. The cries of the people serve only as gentle zephyrs to lull them to repose. Let us hear no more of the "swinish multitude," it is but too evident who are the *Epicuri de grege porci*, or, in plain English, "the hogs in the stye."

In judging of men, or political institutions, the work of men, the infallible test is utility. The man who manufactures a hob-nail, or raises two blades of grafs where there was but one before, is of more value to the State than half the gaudy attendants on a royal birth-day. "Blush, grandeur, blush!" I should wish, were it pofsible, to see your cheeks tinged with an honest crimson. For my part, I cannot help blushing for the bulk of our Peers, not only those who disgrace their hereditary honours, but those who, according to the facetious expreſsion of Lord North, have been lately "kicked up stairs." They seem determined not to falsify the words of Mr. Burke, when he calls them "the Corinthian Capitals of polished society." They do indeed exhibit themselves, to all intents and purposes, as mere "Capitals," made for ornament, and not for

use; and lolling in *right honourable* indolence on the vulgar columns that support them. In the titles of their most illustrious men the Romans placed *Optimus* before *Maximus*. Without wisdom, without virtue, without patriotism, titles are nicknames, and exaltation is infamy. To be exempt from the supplemental militia in the hour of danger, is a favour which neither Peers nor Parsons had a right to expect, and should disdain to accept. Personal service is not absolutely required, and who can better find substitutes? Does not their conduct amount to something like this? You that are useful and industrious must work without intermiſsion in peace, and be "kill'd off" without mercy in war—we are privileged, for WE ARE idle.

But this is not all. Half our Nobility are *on the parish*,—on the public I mean. They are base enough to receive sordid hire for places of little or no trouble or utility. They are ſuch patriots as the Duke of Dorset, who lately sheltered himself from the hair-powder tax, under the pretext of being *one of his Majesty's menial servants*. These creatures, "the living lumber of a court," are too numerous to be mentioned here, and too despicable to be mentioned any where, but you may find their names and salaries in the Court Calendar. It is really shocking to humanity, and insulting to common sense, that a set of places which might be filled at the expence of a few hundred pounds, should cost so many hundreds of thousands, while we are sinking in a bottomleſs sea of debt, and while the middle claſses

want the comforts and conveniencies, and the lower claſses the neceſsaries of life, and when the kingdom is threatened with an invasion. The Overseer of the Poor, the Parish Constable, the Justice of the Peace, the High Sheriff, have nothing for their trouble, and yet their's are offices of the greatest importance and utility, and attended with much labour or expence, or both. Why then should noblemen, many of whom have large patrimonial fortunes, receive such enormous salaries and emoluments for posts or places, some of little, and others of no trouble or use?

I am glad that I am furnished with an opportunity of quoting an author, on this subject, who wrote so long ago as the year 1774. His observations are too beautiful and just to be buried in oblivion. "Ask the Courtiers what produces the present cla-
" mours, and all clamours against Government,
" which is always immaculate. They will answer,
" the desire of places and preferments; which may
" be partly true. But why then do not they *reduce*
" the incomes of the places as low as in Holland?
" Why do they not *abolish* all that are useleſs? They
" do the very contrary. They are continually in-
" creasing the number, if not the value of them.
" They are constantly heaping on fuel, and then
" swear and blaspheme because the fire continues to
" rage. Instead of the challenge, whose ox or
" whose aſs has the King (or his Minister) taken,
" we may ask the crew whose farthing candle, or
" whose small beer have they not taxed? A poor

" hard working man, who has a wife and six chil-
" dren to maintain, can neither enjoy the glorious
" light of heaven, nor the glimmering of a tallow
" taper, without paying the window tax and the
" candle tax. He rises early, and sits up late; he
" fills up the whole day with severe labour; he
" goes to his flock bed with half a bellyful of
" bread and cheese, that his wife and little starve-
" lings may have the more, In the mean while the
" exactors of these taxes are revelling at Mrs. Cor-
" nelly's masquerade, at the expence of more mo-
" ney for one evening's amusement, than the
" wretched hard working man (who is obliged to
" find the money for them to squander) can earn
" by half a year's severe labour."

I cannot resist the temptation of making another extract from this valuable work.——
" The pretence that a King ought to have
" a number of attendants about him, to keep
" up his state, and strike the people with an
" awe of Government, wants no answer. Was
" ever the parade of Government kept up at a
" higher expence than in our times? Was ever Go-
" vernment more despised by its subjects than ours
" is now? Compare our times with those of Queen
" Elizabeth, who refused supplies when offered
" her, saying that the money was as well in the
" people's pockets as in her's, till she came to
" want it."

These paſsages require no comment. I shall only observe, that if such was the case in 1774, a time of profound peace, what must be our situation now, when since that period we have had the American war and the present—wars unexampled in expence and ruin, when our national debt is more than doubled, when not only our burthens are much greater, but the means of bearing them leſs, and when Ministers are more profuse, and the great more luxurious and more unfeeling than ever? Since that period, Mr. Burke exerted all his eloquence and activity to introduce a plan of œconomy into the Expenditure of the Civil List, but he effected little; he found the Lords of the Bed Chamber and the other *Household Troops* too strong for him, and he gave the matter up, declaring that a Home Reform was impracticable, "as long as the King's Turnspit was a Member of Parliament." Since that period too, the Constitution has been mangled by acts of Parliament that take away the liberty of speech and almost fetter thought. In those days they had at least the mournful privilege of complaining, but now a groan is little better than sedition, a distortion of face a misdemeanour, and an articulate murmur high treason.

But to return to our Nobility. During the late war between France and Spain, the Spanish Grandees, with a spirit that did them immortal honour, agreed to receive pay from one office only, though they might hold several, and made a voluntary offer of 25 per cent. upon their places and pensions.

But no such heroism belongs to our noble placemen and pensioners. A ministerial paper told us, some weeks ago, that a subscription would be opened at a great banking house in Pall Mall, for defraying the interest of the late heavy loan. This was a fair appeal to the feelings of the rich and great. It presented a charming opportunity to those *patriots* who have so often declared that they would sacrifice their lives and fortunes in support of this *just and neceſsary war*. But the misfortune was, the plan was too good to be adopted. Avarice and luxury overpower loyalty. I have never heard of one solitary sixpence being subscribed. And yet many of our placemen profit by the war, particularly those, too numerous to be here mentioned, whose emoluments arise from a poundage on the sums which paſs through their respective Offices, and whose gains are in direct proportion to the profusion of the Minister, and the diſtreſs of the kingdom. It appears from the Report of the Auditors of the Public Accounts, that, in the year 1780, the exact sum pocketed by the Officers of the Exchequer, clear of all deductions, was seventy-five thousand eight hundred and sixty-three pounds, nineteen shillings, and threepence three farthings. Fifty-seven thousand eight hundred and thirty-three pounds were divided among eight persons, and, of these, the only man of buſineſs is the First Clerk to the Auditor, and he receives a salary ten times as large as any merchant would pay to a mere accomptant. I omit the long list of Contractors, Loan-jobbers, and other monied harpies, who feed on misery,

and fatten on corruption. Though the King and Kingdom are seriously endangered, not one farthing is to be expected from these sons of rapacity, "cits who prefer a guinea to mankind." No arguments can persuade them to give up a *part* to preserve the *whole*. Nothing but an act of Parliament can make them open their heavy purses; and they are kept in countenance by those who should be Patriots as well as Peers, yet disgrace not only their high-sounding titles, but the name of Englishmen.

I have mentioned the Civil List, which somebody has called "the Cup of Abominations." I shall take the liberty of enlarging a little on the subject, for the sake of those who may not have opportunities of information.

I am an advocate for useful splendour and rational magnificence. I think that our gracious Sovereign should appear, in the eye of the public, with a dignity becoming the first executive Magistrate of a great and powerful nation. But I have too great a respect for his Majesty, to see him "aggrandiz'd into baseneſs." There are some places in the Civil List which are not only expensive, but absurd—not only useleſs, but ridiculous—and tending to diminish, instead of increasing, the glory of the Crown. Their sole effect is to drain the pockets of the people, and add to what Mr. Burke calls "the loaded compost HEAP of corrupt "influence."

The following quotation will draw a sigh from the serious. Speaking of the Civil List, Mr. Burgh says, "There we see places piled on places to the "height of the Tower of Babel. There we find "a Master of the Household, Treasurer of the "Household, Comptroller of the Household, Cof-"ferer of the Household, Deputy Cofferer of the "Household, Clerks of the Household, Clerks Comp-"trollers of the Household, Clerks Comptrollers "Deputy-Clerks of the Household, Office Keepers, "Chamber Keepers, Neceſsary-house Keepers, "Purveyors of Bread, Purveyors of Wine, Pur-"veyors of Fish, Purveyors of Butter and Eggs, "Purveyors of Confectionary, Deliverers of Greens, "Coffee-women, Spicery-men, Spicery-men's-"Aſsistant Clerks, Ewry Men, Ewry-men's Aſsiſt-"ant Clerks, Kitchen-Clerks-Comptrollers First "Clerks, Kitchen-Clerks-Comptrollers Junior "Clerks, Yeomen of the Mouth, Under Yeomen "of the Mouth, Grooms, Groom's Children, Party "Yeomen, Harbingers, Harbingers' Yeomen, "Keepers of Icehouses, Cart-Takers, Cart-Takers' "Grooms, Bell-Ringers, Cock and Cryer, Table-"Deckers, Water-Engine-Turners, Cistern-Clean-"ers, Keepers of Fire-Buckets, and a thousand or "two more of the same kind, which, if I were to "set down, I know not who would take the trou-"ble of reading over. Will any man say, and "keep his countenance, that one in a hundred of "these hangers-on is of any real use? Cannot our "good King have a poached egg to his supper, "unleſs he keeps a Purveyor of Eggs, and his

" Clerks, and his Clerks Deputy Clerks? Again; " who are they the Yeomen of the Mouth, and who " are they the Under Yeomen of the Mouth? What " is it to yeomen a King's mouth? What is the ne- " ceſsity of a Cofferer where there is a Treasurer? " And where there is a Cofferer, what occasion for " a Deputy Cofferer? Why a Neceſsary-house " Keeper? Cannot a King have a water-closet, *and* " *keep the key of it in his own pocket?* And my little " Cock and Cryer, what can be his post? Does he " come under the King's chamber window, and call " the hour, mimicking the crowing of a cock? " This might be of use before clocks and watches, " particularly repeaters, were invented, but seems " as superfluous now as the Deliverer of Greens, " the Coffee Women, Spicery-Mens-Afsistant " Clerks, the Kitchen Comptrollers First Clerks, " and Junior Clerks, the Groom's Children, the " Harbingers, Yeomen, &c. &c. Does the main- " taining such a number of idlers suit the present " state of our finances? When will frugality be " neceſsary, if not now? Queen Anne gave a " hundred thousand pounds a year to the public " service. We pay debts on the Civil List Estab- " lishment of six hundred thousand pounds in one " article, without asking how there comes to be a " deficiency."

Vide Political Disquisitions, vol. ii. *p.* 128.

I appeal to the humblest intellect—I appeal to any one who, as Mr. Erskine says, has only the faculty of being awake, if Monarchy, when its cause

is in danger, would suffer by diminishing this costly catalogue of absurdities. Is is not high time to blunt the point of Milton's sarcasm, who said that "the very trappings of a Monarchy would set up "a Republic?"

In conformity with the spirit of this pamphlet, and the wishes of every honest man, a motion has been lately made for the abolition of useleſs places and odious sinecures. But I am not without apprehensions, that this salutary measure will be defeated by Parliamentary juggle. Like most other matters, it is referred to a secret, garbled Committee, in the appointment of which every one knows Ministerial influence is predominant. No good omen can be drawn from the curious reasoning of Mr. Windham on the subject. He says, that people have a better title to their sinecure places than gentlemen to their landed estates; and adds, what can be got by "such miserable scrapings and sav-"ings, by ends of candles and cheese-parings?" Good God! how habituated to extravagance must those Ministers be, who account tens and hundreds of thousands "mere candle-ends and cheese-par-"ings?" To be *penny wise* they disdain, and persist in being *pound foolish*. But whatever the hot and haughty Windham may think, a fraction of a farthing is of importance when the veins of the people are emptied, and their pockets drained. It is barbarous to insult our misery, and add mockery to ruin. To the squanderers of millions these savings may appear "miserable scraps," but they

would do much in point of example—they would afford a gleam of hope, and tend to calm the effervescence of the public mind.

Cicero tells us, that, in his time, the Consular Senators or Nobles of Rome placed their chief felicity in their fish ponds, their carps, and their mullets, and minded nothing else but training the fish to feed from their hands. He quotes an old Greek poet on the occasion, to the following effect, that "most of them were good for nothing, and the "rest cared for nothing," and from thence he justly predicted their ruin. This is too true a picture of our modern Nobility. In luxury and profligacy they are at least equal to the voluptuous patricians of degenerated Rome. Their adulteries and other immoralities swell the columns of the public prints. Many of them can find no higher amusement than betting large sums on the comparative velocity of two maggots crawling along a table, or two drops of rain falling down a window. Others lodge their hounds in palaces, and spend their tens of thousands in building dog kennels. Others mingle with blackguards, and turn bottle-holders to bruisers. And yet these are styled most high and mighty and noble Princes, the *hereditary Counsellors of the Crown—the perpetual Guardians of British Liberty!!!* The common proverb says, that the King cannot make a Gentleman; and yet we read that one J. Kingston was made a *Gentleman* by King Richard the Second. I hope this valuable prerogative is not grown obsolete: if our Peers do not alter their conduct, it

were devoutly to be wished, that his Majesty would be most graciously pleased to make fewer *Nobles*, and more *Gentlemen*. The London Newspapers of the 5th of May, 1792, tell us "that a late ball "given by Lord Courtney cost six thousand gui- "neas. He had, among other rarities, a thousand "peaches at a guinea each, a thousand pottles of "cherries at five shillings each, a thousand pottles of "strawberries at five shillings each, and every other "article in the same proportion." Another Newspaper, some time ago, had this article: "To such "a degree of perfection are dog-kennels now "brought, that one lately built by Sir William "Rowley, at his seat in Suffolk, covers four acres "of ground. *Among other accommodations for his hounds* "he has erected a warm bath, through which each "dog is regularly *purified* after each day's chase." *Dei boni! rem perditam!* Hounds are kept in luxury, while the poor are starving.

The stoppage of the Bank, in regard to paying specie, is a matter of tremendous moment, the consequences of which lie beyond the reach of the keenest eye. I do not wish to impede this paper circulation—I believe it originates in dire necessity, (but woe to the author of that neceſsity,) and we must submit to what we cannot but deplore. What is become of those "inexhaustible resources," which have so often resounded thro' the speeches of Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer? What has that tuneful modulator of periods, who has been "extracting our brains through our ears," done

with our cash? A plan something similar to the present was, I believe, adopted in the Rebellion in forty-five; but amidst the calamities of that period, the same apprehensions were not entertained of Ministry sending, as they have sent, millions of hard cash into Germany, that voracious vortex of our wealth. It appears that the Bank Directors have repeatedly forewarned Mr. Pitt of the fatal consequences of this foreign drain. It appears also that they have advanced such enormous sums to Government that they are obliged to narrow their discounts, though made in paper, *sed manum de tabulâ.* A train of melancholy ideas rush upon the imagination. The powers of reasoning are suspended, and my pen is tremulous. "O save "my Country, Heav'n!"

The threatening aspect of the times requires the union of every hand and every heart. All petty quarrels and trivial distinctions should be absorbed in the grand consideration of the public safety. Would there not be much wisdom and magnanimity in annihilating religious animosities, and shaking hands with Dissenters of all denominations? They are, generally speaking, a valuable set of men, who have with a high-souled patience suffered a series of mortifications, (to call them by no harsher a name,) and have by honest, persevering industry, not only enriched themselves, but contributed largely to the sum of national wealth. Let it be recollected, that they were of signal service at the Revolution, which placed the pre-

sent family on the Throne. At that glorious æra all sects and all parties were melted down into one solid mass of sterling patriotism. With deference to authority, (reason and justice are above authority,) would it not be sound policy to repeal, or promise to repeal, at this alarming crisis, certain odious, irritating acts, which were repealed in the sister kingdom in the year 1779, and which, though a Churchman myself, I think, and shall ever think, unjust in their principle and impious in their operation? I mean the Test and Corporation Acts, which exclude from Governmental and Corporation Offices men of conscience and character, and submit the solemn rite of the Sacrament to be profaned by the unprincipled and unworthy?

It is not generally known, that the original design of the Test was not to exclude the Protestant Dissenters but the Papists. It was brought in by the Patriots in the reign of Charles the Second, under their apprehension of Popery and a Popish Succession; and when, during the debate in the House of Commons, it was observed that it was drawn up in such a manner as to comprehend the Protestant Dissenters, the Court greatly availed themselves of that circumstance to defeat the bill. But the dissenting members disappointed them, by declaring that they had rather confide in the *justice and generosity of Parliament* to pass some future bill in their favour, than be the occasion of retarding or defeating the security which the present bill was calculated to afford to the liberties of their country.

Their patriotism produced, soon afterwards, a bill for their relief from the penal laws; but the Parliament was prorogued, through the resentment of the Court, to prevent it's paſsing; and when, notwithstanding this, a bill in favour of the Diſsenters did afterwards paſs both Houses, and lay ready for the Royal Aſsent, the Court ventured upon a very extraordinary expedient. The Clerk of the Crown was ordered to convey away the bill, and it was never afterwards to be found.

Vide Turneaux's Letters to Judge Blackstone, p. 133.

The conclusions from these important facts are obvious. Does not this noble sacrifice on the part of the Diſsenters deserve some gratitude on the part of the nation? Have they not an undoubted claim on the justice and generosity of Parliament? Is their disinterested patriotism to operate against themselves? Are they to continue under restraints for giving liberty to the kingdom?

The Quakers likewise, the unambitious, unoffending Quakers, who breathe the genuine spirit of philanthropy to all mankind, have serious grounds of disgust. It was stated in the House of Lords, in 1789, that six Quakers had lately been prosecuted at Coventry for about fourpence each, as Easter Offerings. The expences of the Spiritual Court, charged against them, came to one hundred and sixty pounds eleven shillings. Their own expences

were one hundred and twenty-eight pounds one shilling and sixpence. Two shillings of Easter Offerings were thus to cost two hundred and ninety-three pounds twelve shillings and sixpence. Seven Quakers have been confined for some time in York Castle, for the heavy costs of a Tithe Cause. These unhappy victims of ecclesiastical vengeance have large families, totally dependent on their industry for support. Their brother Quakers cannot, from religious scruples, release them, and the gloomy vindictive priest will not forgive.

To multiply words is needleſs.—As the law now stands, a conscientious Quaker may for fourpence be imprisoned for life. Repeated applications, enforced by the strongest facts and the most pathetic eloquence, have been made to the Legislature for relief, but they have hitherto been baffled by sophistry, or defeated by prejudice.

In the remarkable case of Allen Evans, Esq. a Diſsenter, in the year 1767, (a case infamously oppreſsive upon the Diſsenters, but too long to be here detailed,) Lord Mansfield expreſses the utmost detestation of every kind of religious persecution, as being against *natural religion*, *revealed religion*, and *sound policy*. He declares, that he never read, without rapture, the liberal sentiments of De Thou on this subject, and adds, (hear him! hear him!) "I am sorry that of late De Thou's "countrymen, the French, have begun to open "their eyes, see their error, and *adopt his senti-*

" *ments.* I should not have broke my heart, (I hope
" I may say so without breach of Christian charity,)
" if France had continued to cherish the Jesuits,
" *and persecute the Hugonots.*" Shall we never learn wisdom in the school of adversity? Shall we never profit by instruction, but in contempt of experience persist in adding obstinacy to error? Shall we still reject that soothing system, the consequences of which, when adopted by our enemies, the sagacious Mansfield so much deprecates and dreads? *Fas est et ab hosti doceri.* In liberality of sentiment, in enlightened policy, shall we suffer ourselves to be exceeded by the old arbitrary Government of France? I might easily enlarge upon the subject until a pamphlet were swelled into a volume.

Against an enemy invigorated by conquests, and enriched by plunder, we should exhibit the firmneſs of the *Macedonian Phalanx*, and the ardour of the *Theban Band.* But amidst these scenes of coldneſs and diſsatisfaction, division and digust, it is vain to expect much public energy, and the universal wish, a speedy and honourable peace, is an empty dream. Let conciliatory measures be immediately adopted. Let Mr. Wyndham withdraw his cruel threat of making his soldiers *deaf*, if he cannot make the people *dumb*. Whatever may be thought to the contrary, the common people, the *ignobile vulgus*, are no fools. Dr. Tatham thought so when he said, " It would be a terrible thing
" indeed if the people of England were taught to

"read and write." Though incapable of the subtilties of reasoning, they are able to draw plain conclusions from plain facts, and they are forced to think by being forced to feel. Draw not such a strong line of demarcation between the high and the low, the rich and the poor. My Lords Spiritual and Temporal, recollect the advice of the expiring Sir William Molyneaux (one of the Flodden Field Heroes) to his son; "Let the under wood grow: the tenants are the support of "a family, and the commonalty the strength "of the kingdom." Empty sounds no longer fascinate. Swords and bayonets are neither arguments nor security. Immure not people in gloomy prisons for expreſsions extorted by imperious neceſsity. Use soothing and persuasive means. Ye have no taste for genuine fame. The path to immortality is easy. In imitation of the Spanish Grandees, sacrifice at the shrine of public neceſsity, for a time at least, part of your pensions and salaries. Send to the provisional cavalry, and supplemental militia, some of your idle horses and servants. Ye have the example of France before your eyes. Ye may know by experience, that a certain degree of unpitied distreſs produces desperation, and when forced to resistance, *beasts of burden* may become *beasts of prey*. I am no flatterer. I exhibit a sort of coarse friendship, and speak bold truths. It will not become you to be angry with me. Can you be angry with a man who, when he sees you nodding on the brink of ruin, strives to wake you by shouting in your ears, or wringing your noses? You

surely will not imitate the Irishman, who challenged the man that saved him from drowning, because he pulled him out of the water by the hair of his head.

Abundant matter crouds round my pen; every day teems with events of an awful magnitude: but I must conclude. As Republicanism is advancing with such coloſsal strides, it is hoped that there are few people divested of prejudice, who do not see the neceſsity of a sober, dispaſsionate, but radical reform. Every thing that is ancient is not therefore right. An extreme horror of innovation is childish, and to repair is not to destroy. Shall not a 'rotten plank' be stirred, or a brick manifestly out of order, be changed in the old pyramid? Shall not a decayed branch be lopt off to give new vigour to the venerable oak? Hear what an illustrious statesman says on the subject. The Earl of Buchan, in a late publication, tells us, that he once said to Lord Chatham, "what will become of poor "England, who doats on the imperfections of her "*pretended* Constitution?" Chatham replied, "the "gout will dispose of me soon enough to prevent "me from feeling the consequences of this infa- "tuation; but *before the end of this century*, either "the Parliament will reform itself from *within*, "or be reformed with a vengeance from *without*."

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A

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